

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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SR-02 ORM-01 OMB-01 DPW-01 /075 W

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R 310907Z MAR 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4373

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 3335

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, VS, VN

SUBJ: PRC COMMENTARY ON VIETNAMESE SITUATION

SUMMARY: A HIGH-LEVEL PEOPLE'S DAILY COMMENTATOR'S ARTICLE MARCH 30 PROVIDED THE FIRST AUTHORITATIVE PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE VIETNAMESE SITUATION BY PEKING SINCE THE CURRENT OFFENSIVE BEGAN. THE US IS CRITICIZED MILDLY FOR SUPPORTING SAIGON BUT NO REFERENCE TO ANY IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY IS MADE. THE ARTICLE MAKES NO DEMANDS, DOES NOT PREDICT THE FALL OF THE "THIEU CLIQUE", AND PLEDGES ONLY THE SUPPORT OF THE "CHINESE PEOPLE." THIS RATHER LUKEWARM PRC TREATMENT SUGGESTS PEKING IS NOT READY AT THIS TIME TO PROVIDE ALL-OUT BACKING OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS AND MAY HAVE BEEN CAUGHT OFF-GUARD BY THE PACE OF THE CHANGING VIETNAMESE SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. IN THE FIRST AUTHORITATIVE PRC PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE CURRENT NORTH VIETNAMESE OFFENSIVE, A PEOPLE'S DAILY COMMEN-  
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TARY ARTICLE MARCH 30 CONGRATULATED THE "FRATERNAL SOUTH

VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND ARMY" ON THEIR VICTORIES. THE OFFENSIVE IS DEPICTED AS PUNISHMENT OF THE THIEU CLIQUE FOR ITS FLAGRANT VIOLATIONS OF THE PARIS ACCORDS AND SAIGON IS CHARGED AS HAVING "ARBITRARILY DISCONTINUED" THE PARIS CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE AND "REPEATEDLY SABOTAGED THE NORMAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION." SAIGON'S COUNTER-CLAIMS ARE DISMISSED AS THE "TRICK OF THE THIEF CRYING 'STOP THIEF'."

2. THE ARTICLE, RATHER MILDLY, "POINTS OUT" THAT THE US HAS THE OBLIGATION TO SEE THAT THE THIEU CLIQUE "STRICTLY HONORS" THE PARIS ACCORDS BUT THAT THE US NOT ONLY FAILED TO LIVE UP TO THIS REQUIREMENT BUT "EVEN ILLEGALLY SHIPPED LARGE QUANTITIES OF ARMS" TO VIETNAM. "MORE SERIOUS," ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, IS GENERAL WEYAND'S VISIT TO SAIGON AND THE SENDING OF US WARSHIPS TO VIETNAMESE WATERS" WITH A VIEW TO INTIMIDATING THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES AND PEOPLE." THE ARTICLE ADDS "SUCH SCHEMES WILL NEVER SUCCEED."

3. IN CONCLUSION, HOWEVER, THE ARTICLE MAKES NO DEMANDS, THREATS NOR PREDICTIONS. PLEDGING CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE "CHINESE PEOPLE," THE ARTICLE MERELY WANTS THAT THE "THIEU CLIQUE" WILL FACE MORE DEFEATS IF IT "REFUSES TO DRAW LESSONS FROM ITS FAILURE, CONTINUES TO SABOTAGE THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND PROVOKES WAR." NO REFERENCE IS MADE BY "COMMENTATOR" TO IMPLICATIONS THESE DEVELOPMENTS MIGHT HAVE FOR THE US OR US POLICIES.

4. COMMENT: PEKING HAS BEEN NOTABLY SLOW IN PUBLICIZING VIETNAMESE DEVELOPMENTS WITH ITS MEDIA COVERAGE CONSISTING MOSTLY OF FOREIGN NEWS REPLAYS OR HANOI REPORTS. THE TONE OF THE COMMENTATOR ARTICLE, WITH ITS RATHER MILD CRITICISM OF THE USG, ITS FAILURE TO CALL CLEARLY FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THIEU, AND ITS GUARDED OUTLOOK ON FURTHER PRG VICTORIES, SUGGESTS THAT THE PACE OF EVENTS IN VIETNAM HAVE CAUGHT THE PRC SOMEWHAT OFF-GUARD. COMMUNIST VIETNAMESE, WHO HAVE RECENTLY COMPLAINED OF THE LACK OF CHINESE MATERIAL AND MORAL SUPPORT, ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE PLEASED WITH THIS RATHER LUKEWARM PRC TREATMENT OF THEIR MOST SOLID VICTORIES WHICH THE ARTICLE EVEN CLAIMS WERE "ENTIRELY THE INEVITABLE RESULTS" OF THIEU'S POLICIES.

5. THE ARTICLE ALSO NOTICEABLY DIFFERS FROM RECENT PRC MEDIA  
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COMMENTS ON CAMBODIA, WHERE THE SITUATION IS DEPICTED AS AN INEVITABLE GRUNK VICTORY NO MATTER WHAT ASSISTANCE THE USG MAY ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE. CLEARLY, THE PRC SEES THE VIETNAMESE SITUATION IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT THAN CAMBODIA AND IS NOT READY AT THIS TIME TO PROVIDE UNRESTRAINED BACKING OF THE PRG OR THE DRVN. THE HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE PARIS ACCORDS LEAVES OPEN THE SUGGESTION THAT THE PRC MIGHT BE RECEPTIVE TO A "REOPENING" OF NEGOTIATIONS AMONG THE SIGNATORIES.

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